



California Farmland Conservancy Program

Focus on Farmland

Newsletter of the CFCP

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Volume 1, Number 4

This edition of Focus on Farmland features:

- updates on federal Farmland Protection Program funding,
- recent planning projects using CFCP funding, and
- Institute for Local Self Government's Farmland Protection Guidebook available.

Read on!

Federal Farmland Protection Program RFP Released

The Farmland Protection Program has issued its Request for Proposals (RFP) for the 2003 funding cycle. Up to \$100 million nationwide is available this fiscal year for the purchase of agricultural conservation easements. (The portion of that funding being made available to California has not yet been announced.) The RFP provides detailed information about the requirements and application process. Applications are due in the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) State Office in Davis by May 19, 2003. The RFP may be downloaded from the NRCS website:

<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/farmland/2002/pubntcs/fpp.rfp.html>

As in previous Farmland Protection Program (FPP) funding cycles, applicants applying for matching funding from the California Farmland Conservancy Program (CFCP) may use the CFCP application for FPP funding as well, as long as additional requirements of the FPP (e.g., historical or archaeological significance) are addressed. Applications should be submitted directly to NRCS by the deadline. Although the same application may be used, applicants must apply to CFCP and FPP separately. Three copies should be submitted to FPP, and five copies should be submitted to CFCP.

The California NRCS office is also in the process of finalizing additional considerations specifically for California FPP proposals. The considerations are being developed by working groups of the FPP sub-committee of the State Technical Advisory Committee. California NRCS will use the national



FPP criteria to evaluate proposals, but may place a higher priority on projects that also address any of the additional considerations identified for projects in California.

If questions arise about partnering with CFCP and FPP for this funding cycle, please do not hesitate to contact CFCP. For questions regarding FPP or for a copy of the proposed considerations for California FPP proposals, contact Jim Kocsis of the Natural Resources Conservation Service, at 530-792-5605 or jim.kocsis@ca.usda.gov.

Photo by Charles Tyson.

Planning Grants Broaden Easement Possibilities

Great Valley Center & American Farmland Trust Connect in Central Valley

Two of the Central Valley's agricultural land preservation leaders, the Great Valley Center and the American Farmland Trust, jointly applied for and recently received a planning grant from the California Farmland Conservancy Program. The project aims to increase the number of agricultural conservation easement transactions over the next two years in four target counties: San Joaquin, Merced, Stanislaus and Yolo.

The grant supports preliminary project development activities such as: strategic planning for easement acquisition in each county; negotiation of easement terms with landowners; appraisals; title research; and project management until an individual project secures funding for the easement acquisition. These services will be provided by a number of experienced planning and transaction specialists, in partnership with local communities and land trusts. The Merced County Farmlands & Open Space Trust, the Stanislaus Farmland Trust, and Yolo Land Trust have partnered with the Great Valley Center as Partnership Communities in its Ag Transactions Program. San Joaquin County has benefited from on-going efforts by the County Planning Department and Farm Bureau, as well as others, to increase awareness of the importance of protecting its valuable farmland and opportunities to do so.



Photo by Robert Deering.

The CFCP is providing \$197,000 toward project costs, the largest CFCP planning grant to date. The Great Valley Center and American Farmland Trust are collectively providing \$375,000 in matching funds.

Napa County Land Trust Bolsters its Agricultural Easement Donation Activities

The Land Trust of Napa County recently received a CFCP grant of \$63,500 to conduct an assessment of farming and grazing lands within the county as part of a long-range strategic planning process. A series of focus groups and interviews will assist in developing criteria for prioritizing important farmland for protection. As follow up to the assessment phase, the CFCP grant will also cover the land trust's costs to acquire three donated easements on agricultural lands in the Napa Valley.

CFCP Planning Grant Opportunities

These planning grants reflect the requirements of bond funding in CFCP's planning grants. With CFCP funding now exclusively from bonds, planning projects must now be directly related to easement acquisition projects. While this no longer allows CFCP to fund planning grants more broadly oriented to general outreach or research, it does provide land trusts and other easement holders with an opportunity to seek grants for those "up-front" expenses that projects incur before easement funding is secured.

If your organization is considering a CFCP planning grant, discuss your ideas with a CFCP grant manager. You may be asked to put your ideas in writing: a short "pre-proposal" allows CFCP to provide more detailed feedback to you before you develop complete grant application. For details, please review Chapter 3 of the CFCP Request for Grant Applications (available online:

www.conservation.ca.gov/dlrp/cfcp/funding).

CFCP Grant Funding & Application Process

The CFCP accepts grant applications on a continuous basis. The CFCP Request for Grant Applications (RFGA) can be downloaded from the CFCP's website:

http://www.conservation.ca.gov/dlrp/cfcp/funding/request_grant_app.htm. Grant applicants are encouraged to contact CFCP staff for an early consultation regarding project ideas.

REMINDER: Changes to the CFCP statute made by Senate Bill 1864 last year became **effective January of 2003**. For information on changes, see the Public Resources Code and the CFCP website <http://www.conservation.ca.gov/dlrp/cfcp/funding/> to print updates to the RFGA.

In Brief:

Institute for Local Self Government's Farmland Protection Guidebook Available

The CFCP has a limited number of copies of the Farmland Protection Action Guide. They are available to interested individuals at no charge. Published by the Institute for Local Self Government, in part through assistance from a CFCP planning grant, this handbook takes an in-depth look at farmland protection from the local agency perspective. The guide details 24 strategies that local officials can use to develop a comprehensive farmland protection program and build the public support necessary to implement it. More information about the guide can be found at the Institute for Local Self Government's website: <http://www.ilsf.org>. The Institute for Local Self Government is the nonprofit research arm of the League of California Cities.

To request a copy of the guide, send an e-mail, along with your mailing address, to ddobrine@consrv.ca.gov



Photo by Don Drysdale.

Tim Bryant joins CFCP Staff

CFCP welcomed Tim Bryant as a half-time project manager in March. Tim has been with Department of Conservation since 1998, working in the Williamson Act/Open Space Subvention Program. He continues that work in addition to his new project management duties with CFCP. Tim is another UC Davis graduate, with a B.S. degree in Environmental Policy Analysis and Planning. Most of his free time is spent bicycling, baking or cooking. (Cooking and eating well are on the CFCP duty statement – we enjoy the fruits of our labor!)

We hope you've found the *Focus on Farmland* useful and informative. Please contact us with any questions or ideas you have for future editions. Feel free to forward this email to other interested parties.

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